

figure out what we're doing, and then we're going to make you vote. I think the American people and the jury of the American public want this thing out in the sunlight. Open the doors. Share the information. Let us know what's going on, Mr. Speaker. That's what the American people need to know. Their health care is at stake.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, the Republicans are invoking Freddy Krueger and saying that he wrote the Democrats' health plan, and it's going to be dangerous for Americans. Really scary.

I'll tell you what's scary. Scary is losing your job and being confronted with a bill for continued health insurance that eats up two-thirds of your benefits. Even more scary—and this has happened to people in my district—is having your company go bankrupt and being told that your health insurance will cost more than your unemployment benefits. That is, if you can get it; if you've never been sick, if your kids have never been sick. You can go into the private market and buy a policy that exceeds your unemployment insurance. Of course if you have ever been sick, a preexisting condition, forget about it.

The Republicans promised 132 days ago that they would have their own health care plan. Where is it? Now 132 days later, you know why we don't have it, why there is a resounding silence on that side? Because if you are going to take care of people with health care, you have to take on their two biggest benefactors, the pharmaceutical industry and the insurance industry. And that's the last thing the Republicans want to do, take on their biggest campaign benefactors. We have to take on pharmaceuticals, take on the insurance industry and have meaningful reform for all Americans.

DEMOCRAT HEALTH PLAN HURTS AMERICAN SENIORS

(Mr. HASTINGS of Washington asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, the Democrats, contrary to what we have been hearing, are behind closed doors, writing a sweeping change to our health care system. Unfortunately, a government takeover of health care, as we know, would raise taxes, eliminate choices, fine small businesses, and cut Medicare by more than \$500 billion. According to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, the proposed cuts would result in millions of seniors losing their current plan, including 100,000 in my State of Washington. I have spoken with many hospitals in my district who say that Medicare cuts would have serious consequences on them.

We need reform, Mr. Speaker, but Americans deserve better than secret deals. I support proposals to make purchasing insurance more affordable, expand health savings accounts, help small businesses afford their benefits and end lawsuit abuse. It's time to begin open, transparent, bipartisan work on legislation that actually increases choices and lowers cost.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. WEINER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WEINER. Ladies and gentlemen, I have a viewer's guide for what's going to be going on on this side of the aisle this morning and this afternoon. What essentially it comes down to is my Republican friends don't want you, the American people, to have what they have.

They say they don't want any government-run health care, but 55 of them have Medicare. You don't see them sending that back. They say that they don't want the plan that we have, which would create more choices for the American people. Well, they don't want you to have what they have. Go to the Web site for the Federal Employees Health Benefit plan and see what a great plan they have, but they don't want you to have more choice.

Frankly, I don't know what it is they do want. They said 131 days ago they were going to have a plan. You hear that sound? That's the sound of their plan. They don't seem to have one. I have heard us talk about all this stuff going on behind closed doors. My friends, there are five committees, five bills. You can read them. I know it's a lot of words, but you can see exactly what the plan is. Listen to the American people. Give them what you in Congress have, a public option, like Medicare; and choices, like the insurance plan you have.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded that the rules of the House require that remarks be addressed to the Chair.

□ 1315

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. WITTMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, today, millions of Americans cannot afford or do not have access to health insurance.

Since 1999, health care insurance premiums have more than doubled for most Americans. Virginians are not immune to the Nationwide trend in health care. For the last several years, health care premiums in Virginia have

increased at approximately 10 percent a year, and today, more than 1.1 million Virginians are uninsured.

From the hourly worker in Newport News, Virginia, who must somehow find room in his or her budget to pay for health insurance, to the small business owner in Fredericksburg, Virginia, who voluntarily chooses to provide health insurance as a benefit to his or her employees but, with the slowing economy, is finding it incredibly difficult to absorb increased health insurance costs, Virginians are struggling to find affordable health care.

I've been traveling around my district, and have held dozens of meetings with constituents and with my 150-plus-member health advisory council, and thousands of e-mails are pouring into my office each week. In addition, I have also hosted multiple town hall meetings and tele-town hall meetings.

What I am hearing from my constituents is that they do not want to be forced into a new government-run health care plan that will limit their choices of doctors and of medical treatment options. Equally as important is to protect our small businesses, which are the backbone of our economy, from being penalized.

I hope that we will take this opportunity to craft legislation across the aisle that will make health care more affordable, that will enhance access for all Americans, that will ensure patients are getting their health care, and that will guarantee that doctors and patients, not insurance companies, are making important health care decisions.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. SARBANES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SARBANES. Hang on, America. Help is on the way.

Mr. Speaker, a bill that will create insurance coverage for millions of people who have no insurance coverage now is on the way. A bill that will provide better coverage for those who are underinsured and that will deal with preexisting condition exclusions from coverage provisions is on the way. A bill that will strengthen Medicare is on the way. A bill that will improve our delivery system is on the way. A bill that will strengthen the health care workforce is on the way.

That is what is coming. The simple proposition we need to test here and what Americans want to know is, when it comes to the insurance industry, are we going to go on living in their world and playing by their rules or are they going to start living in our world and playing by our rules? That's the question here.

The bill we're putting forward is finally going to make the insurance industry adhere to good practices. That's why we're going to pass this bill. We're going to do it for the citizens of this country.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. GOODLATTE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, somewhere in this Capitol, behind closed doors, the Democrats, by themselves, are writing a health care reform bill that is going to cost the taxpayers of this country more than \$1 trillion.

Added on top of the enormous debt that we already have, this legislation is also going to include mandates that are going to risk millions of American jobs. At a time when we have nearly 10 percent unemployment and nearly 15 million people in this country looking for work, they're going to pass legislation that's going to cost millions of more jobs if they attempt to mandate on small businesses, which are struggling, an additional obligation of an 8½ percent payroll tax.

In addition, this is going to harm our senior citizens in a multitude of ways. Those of them who are on Medicare Advantage plans, like thousands in my congressional district in Virginia, are going to lose the opportunity to participate in those plans as they take \$162 billion in cuts out of that portion of Medicare and \$400 billion in cuts from Medicare overall.

Save our seniors. Vote against this bad plan.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, we need health care reform right now. We need it on behalf of the 47 million people who don't have insurance. We need it on behalf of the 217 in my district who don't have any insurance.

They talk about costs. What costs are going to go up if we don't do anything about health coverage?

Right now, many of our seniors are suffering. They're wondering how they're going to pay their health care bills, how they're going to put food on the table and how they're going to take care of themselves. A lot of youth are asking: How are we going to provide health insurance for a lot of us who don't have it?

We owe it to the American people. This is not about maintaining the status quo, and this is not about protecting the insurance companies. This is about doing something for the American people. It's time that we have a health plan that covers all Americans to make sure that we're not left out, to make sure that everybody has the ability to enjoy their quality of life and to be able to say: You know what? I know that I'm going to get coverage, and it doesn't matter where I am.

I am not going to maintain the status quo. With the Republicans, it's all about maintaining the status quo, and that's not what America wants. We

need to make sure that we have a health plan.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. ALEXANDER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. Speaker, Senate Majority Leader HARRY REID has included an opt-out plan into this health care plan. We all know that it is still just a government-run plan that's going to require a vote of the legislature.

Now, do we really think that the Governor and the legislature are going to vote for a plan that opts them out of the plan but yet requires the taxpayers of that State to pay for that plan? Why, of course not.

Whether it's opt-out, opt-in, trigger plan—whatever it's called—it's still a government-run plan that's going to create an unfair advantage for the government against private insurance, causing many people to lose their plans.

I am not going to vote for a plan that raises taxes, that cuts benefits or that drives a Washington bureaucrat between the patients whom I represent and the physicians.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker and Members of the House, during my recent trips back to my congressional district, I spent time with many small business owners who are still in business and who are able to continue to keep their doors open, but they do so by cutting back the health care benefits to themselves and to their workers. In some cases, they're getting rid of health care, and they lament that fact because they are very fond of their workforce. They believe that they're very productive and that they've helped them, but they simply cannot afford it.

They're part of a larger movement in this country of businesses, both large and small, to get out of the health care field and to stop offering these benefits, in some cases, to new hires and, in some cases, to all of their employees. We're seeing this with a record number of companies. Why are they doing that?

It's for the same reason that families are struggling. It's because the costs of health care continue to go up and up and up. It's crushing America's families and it's crushing America's businesses.

That's why we're going to have in the next couple of weeks a vote on health care in this House and in the Senate, and we will send a bill to the President's desk so that, finally, we will have real competition in this system and so that insurance companies will no longer run this system for their fun and profit.

The time for change is coming. It is time now for health care for all Americans.

HEALTH CARE

(Ms. FALLIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. FALLIN. Mr. Speaker, one of the groups which is suffering under the tough economic times is seniors.

Some are still working to earn enough money just to make ends meet. Some are on fixed incomes, and every slight increase in expenses can cause them to experience difficult times.

That's why I'm very concerned about the Democrats' health care proposal to make massive cuts to Medicare Advantage plans, which would take benefits away from our senior citizens, even though President Obama has promised Americans that, if they like their health care plans, they can keep them.

The Democrats' plan to cut Medicare Advantage will limit choices; it will cause seniors to lose their coverage; it will increase prescription drug premiums by as much as 20 percent. It will even have an exceptionally harmful impact on seniors in rural areas when we try to force them into a one-size-fits-all government plan.

I will not support a health care plan that cuts benefits for millions of our seniors, who have worked their entire lives paying into this system. We can't ask our seniors on fixed incomes to pay higher costs, and we can't force seniors off of their health care plans they choose.

As a Republican, I am for health care reform, but it's wrong to finance health care reform on the backs of our seniors.

HEALTH CARE

(Mr. SCOTT of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SCOTT of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, ladies and gentlemen, America is a great country. It is the greatest country on the face of the Earth.

The reason that it is the greatest country on the face of the Earth is that, at great moments of crisis, this country has risen to the occasion. When it was during the Depression, we rose to the occasion. When we needed Social Security, we rose to the occasion. With Medicare, we rose to the occasion.

Also at that time, there were the naysayers. There were people who would just say "no." That's what my friends on the other side of the aisle did. Where is their plan? They have no plan.

At this moment of crisis, we Democrats are standing here, and are saying America deserves better. America deserves the best. Now, they talk about our being in the dark with plans? We've had health care debates. We've had